Wikipedia
The Free Encyclopedia

Main page
Contents
Current events
Random article
About Wikipedia
Contact us
Donate

Contribute
Help
Learn to edit
Community portal
Recent changes
Upload file

Tools
What links here
Related changes
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Cite this page
Wikidata item

Print/export
Download as PDF
Printable version

In other projects
Wikimedia Commons

Languages
Cebuano
Edit links

Aberjona River

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 42°29′17″N 71°7′24″W

The **Aberjona River** is a 9.3-mile-long (15.0 km),[1] heavily urbanized river in the northwestern suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts. The name is from the Natick language and means "junction or confluence".[2]

The river rises in Reading, flows roughly south through Woburn and Winchester, and empties into the Mystic Lakes. It is generally small and heavily channelized, often running through underground culverts, but is quite apparent in Winchester center where it widens into Judkins Pond and the Mill Pond. The river's 25 square mile watershed covers most of Woburn and about half of Winchester, as well as portions of the surrounding communities of Lexington, Burlington, Wilmington, Reading, Wakefield, and Stoneham.

The Aberjona River was first identified by Europeans shortly after 1631, when Captain Edward Johnson explored the area. The name *Aberjona* appears in the earliest colonial records, but its origins are unknown. By 1865 there were 21 tanneries and currying shops in Woburn, and by the 1870s pollution from tanneries in Woburn and Winchester was affecting both the river and the Upper Mystic Lake (then a public water supply). The Massachusetts Legislature banned the discharge of wastes into Horn Pond Brook (a tributary) in 1907 and into the Aberjona in 1911.

A 1995 study by Spliethoff and Hemond analyzed sediments of the Upper Mystic Lake with industrial records, and determined that high concentrations of arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, and zinc were deposited by chemical and leather industries dating from the early 1900s.

In the 1995 bestseller *A Civil Action* (and 1998 film starring John Travolta), a 15 acres (6.1 ha) parcel of forest, field, and marshland on the banks of the Aberjona River is recalled by witnesses as the place where workers from abutting industrial plants (owned by W.R. Grace & Co. and Beatrice Foods) dumped trichloroethylene (TCE) and other toxic chemicals into trenches, or "swimming pools", "within a few inches of the water." At one time, the Aberjona River had "run clear and full of fish."

From 1969 into the early 1980s, the Industri-plex site was developed along the river due to its proximity to the I-93 / I-95 junction. Industri-plex manufacturing plants contributed to the area's extensive contamination with chemicals used by the local paper, textile and leather industries, including lead-arsenic insecticides, acetic acid, benzene and toluene, and sulfuric acid. Industri-plex is now a "superfund" site, although substantially remediated.

Aberjona River

The river just below the Mill Pond in Winchester center

Location	
Country	United States
Physical characteristics	
Mouth	
• location	Mystic Lakes
• elevation	7 ft (2.1 m)
Basin size	25 sq mi (65 km^2)

USGS map of the river's watershed area

References [edit source]

1. ^ U.S. Geological Survey. National Hydrography Dataset high-resolution flowline data. The National Map Archived 2012-04-05 at WebCite, accessed April 1, 2011
2. ^ Huden, John C (1962). *Indian place names of New England*. New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. p. 15. Retrieved 16 May 2018.

Notes [edit source]

This article includes a list of general references, but it remains largely unverified because **it lacks sufficient corresponding inline citations**. Please help to improve this article by introducing more precise citations. *(June 2009) (Learn how and when to remove this template message)*

- Harr, Jonathan (1995), A Civil Action, Vintage Press, pages 11–13; 18; 185-193
- USGS Aberjona River project
- EPA Aberjona River project
- NOAA Aberjona River photographs
- Mystic River Watershed Association
- Henry M. Spliethoff and Harold F. Hemond, "History of Toxic Metal Discharge to Surface Waters of the Aberjona Watershed", American Chemical Society

V · T · E **Reading, Massachusetts** [show]
V · T · E **Woburn, Massachusetts** [show]
V · T · E **Rivers of Massachusetts by drainage system** [show]

Categories: Rivers of Middlesex County, Massachusetts | Reading, Massachusetts | Woburn, Massachusetts | Winchester, Massachusetts | Rivers of Massachusetts

This page was last edited on 29 December 2020, at 05:21.

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policy About Wikipedia Disclaimers Contact Wikipedia Mobile view Developers Statistics Cookie statement

a WIKIMEDIA project Powered by MediaWiki